GOVT 2305  
Ideology – What is Government for Anyway?   
Part 3 – Ideology in the United States after World War 2

This file is still a bit rough, but the content should suffice for the quiz.  
  
  
  
In these last few slides I’ll try to outline the recent history of ideology in the United States and clarify – to the degree I can – what ideological terms means today.  
  
I’ll also try to outline the internal disputes that exist within each ideology.

These two paragraphs from Wikipedia’s entry on [left-right politics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Left%E2%80%93right_politics) should help describe where the left and right are currently aligned in American politics:

1 - “The contemporary Left in the United States is usually understood as a category including [New Deal liberals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_American_liberalism), [Rawlsian liberals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Rawls), [social democrats](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_democracy) and [civil libertarians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_libertarianism), and is generally identified with the [Democratic Party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democratic_Party_(United_States)). In general, *left-wing* implies a commitment to [egalitarianism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egalitarianism), support for social policies that favor the [working class](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Working_class), and [multiculturalism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multiculturalism). The contemporary Left usually defines itself as promoting government regulation of business, commerce and industry; protection of fundamental rights such as freedom of speech and freedom of religion; and government intervention on behalf of racial, ethnic, and sexual [minorities](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minorities) and the working class.”

As mentioned in a previous set of slides, liberals tend to focus on equality.   
  
Most liberal positions can be understood as ways to enhance equality, or equal protection.

Liberalism also takes a more collective approach to solving problems.  
  
Meaning that it sees governmental intervention as a legitimate way to solve problems

2 – “The contemporary Right in the United States is usually understood as a category including [social conservatives](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_conservatism), [Christian conservatives](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Right) and [free market](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_market) liberals, and is generally identified with the [Republican Party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republican_Party_(United_States)). In general, *right-wing* implies a commitment to [conservative](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conservatism) Christian values, support for a free-market system, and "traditional family values". The contemporary Right usually defines itself as promoting [deregulation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deregulation) of banking, commerce, and industry.”

Conservatism tends to prioritize liberty over equality.  
  
Efforts to promote equality – like providing public education or health care – compromise individualism by imposing public solutions on the general population and using tax payer dollars to fund it.

Conservatives are more likely to support efforts by the private sector or voluntary organizations like churches to solve public problems.  
  
And if they cannot solve the problems, then perhaps they cannot be solved.

We’ve already discussed the transformation of the term liberal.   
  
Classical liberalism has much in common with certain variant of contemporary conservatism – or libertarianism. Contemporary liberalism is better seen as an outgrowth of progressivism, or [social liberalism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_liberalism).

Blog Posts  
  
[Liberals](http://theweakerparty.blogspot.com/search/label/liberals)  
[Liberalism](http://theweakerparty.blogspot.com/search/label/liberalism)

While it still embraces market economies, it argues that market freedoms ought to be balanced against the needs of the community. Economic and social issues like poverty, health care and education are legitimate subjects government can deal with.   
  
Liberals also support the expansion of civil and political rights and the equal protection of the laws.

[Modern liberalism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_liberalism_in_the_United_States) generally sees government as a force that can be used successfully to address social ills, often those created by the private sector: pollution for example.  
  
Though we will be using the term “liberalism” its probably best to think of what follows in terms of “progressivism.”

This was the assumption that formed the basis for the progressive movement, [the New Deal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Deal) and the [Great Society](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Society).

I mentioned before that the political divisions that evolved during the New Deal continue to define the nature of ideological dispute today.  
  
 Few conservative voices existed during that period. Liberalism became dominant with the election of Franklin Roosevelt in 1932, and would continue to be so through the late 1970s, though it began to fragment considerably with the election of Richard Nixon in 1968.

As we will note soon enough, the current Democratic Party tends to be liberal and the current Republican Party tends to be conservative. Though there are variations within each. We’ll try to make sense of this over the course of the semester.  
  
The positions of the parties shift however and its worth understanding the nature of these shifts.

[Theodore Roosevelt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodore_roosevelt) became a leader of the Progressive movement. He has worked for civil service reform and against police corruption before becoming president.  
  
As president he aggressively sought to break apart monopolies and established regulatory agencies. He also sought to increase American influence overseas.

[Franklin Roosevelt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franklin_D._Roosevelt) was elected president in 1932 with the promise to use aggressive government policies – the [New Deal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Deal) - to deal with the problems related to the [Great Depression](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Depression_in_the_United_States).   
  
This included the imposition of regulations to prevent future depressions as well policies designed to assist those hurt by the economic collapse.

[John Maynard Keynes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Maynard_Keynes) was a British economist who argued that aggressive governmental intervention could help pick the economy up out of the [Great Depression](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Depression).   
  
His theories are still promoted as ways to jump start the economy when it is recession. This is referred to as [Keynesian Economics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keynesian_economics).

This argument challenged the prevailing idea that the ordinary operations of the free market would allow the economy to pick itself.  
  
This was also referred to as classical economics.

[Harry Truman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_truman) followed FDR into the White House and began to use his influence to fight racial segregation.

[Lyndon Johnson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lyndon_B._Johnson) had the legislative influence to muscle civil rights legislation through Congress as well as [Great Society](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Society) programs that attempted to use governmental programs to deal effectively with poverty.

Johnson’s presidency proved to be the high watermark of liberalism in the United States – the idea that governmental programs – notably national programs could address social and economic problems.  
  
But a backlash was underway which would lead to the development of the conservative movement.

Even during the New Deal, a [conservative coalition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conservative_coalition) in Congress existed that attempted – unsuccessfully – to stop New Deal programs. Their leader was Ohio Senator [Robert Taft](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Taft).   
  
These folks were also referred to as the [Old Right](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Right_(United_States)).

Liberalism/progressivism would be the dominant ideology for several decades following the onset of the Great Depression. If you need a specific year for when this period ended, try 1980 and the election of Ronald Reagan who represented the conservative wing of the Republican Party.   
  
Conservatism was considered to be a non-factor until then, but forces would begin to develop that would seek to change that.

A small handful of writers started articulating ideas that would become the basis for the rise of the conservative movement beginning in the 1960s and is still powerful today.  
  
As opposed to liberalism – which rested on the idea that government should be an active force in ensuring equity in society – conservatism rested on at least two general ideas.

1 – That policies that promote equity by redistributing benefits and resources in society violate individual freedom – which they consider to be a superior value.  
  
2 – Traditional social relationship – especially those based on local communities, religion and family – have merit, and they should not be interfered with by governmental policies.

In 1953, [Russell Kirk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russell_Kirk) wrote [the Conservative Mind](http://www.amazon.com/The-Conservative-Mind-Burke-Eliot/dp/0895261715) which consolidated conservative principles.  
  
Many at odds with the principles that guided the progressive movement – notably the idea that societies could be transformed based on newly developed theories.

“In a revolutionary epoch, sometimes men taste every novelty, sicken of them all, and return to ancient principles so long disused that they seem refreshingly hearty when they are rediscovered.”   
  
[Click here](https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/50252.Russell_Kirk) for lots of Kirk quotes.

He was also a critic of libertarianism

“Libertarians (like anarchists and Marxists) generally believe that human nature is good, though damaged by certain social institutions. Conservatives, on the contrary, hold that "in Adam's fall we sinned all": human nature, though compounded of both good and evil, is irremediably flawed; so the perfection of society is impossible, all human beings being imperfect.”

Along with [William Buckley](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_F._Buckley,_Jr.), Kirk founded the [National Review](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Review), a magazine that further helped develop and promote conservative viewpoints.   
  
Soon enough candidates began running for office based on those ideas. These folks were respond to the [New Right](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Right).

This might be his most famous quote:  
  
“A Conservative is a fellow who is standing athwart history yelling 'Stop!‘”

This has led to the accusation that conservatism is less about ideology and simply a [reactionary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reactionary) movement that simply opposes reform and wishes to return to a previous political state where they enjoyed more power.

The movement began to pick up steam in the early 1960s.   
  
The [1964 Republican Convention](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1964_Republican_National_Convention) pit moderate – establishment, even liberal – Republicans against an increasingly strong conservative sector. The later was able to ensure its candidate became the party’s nominee.

Here’s background on “[movement conservatism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Movement_conservatism).” This refers to the ideological group that attempted to first control the Republican Party and then the national government in order to further its aims.   
  
For more info click on [Conservatism in the United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conservatism_in_the_United_States).

[Barry Goldwater](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barry_Goldwater) would also lead the conservative coalition, and would be the Republican nominee for the presidency in 1964 – he was defeated handily, but set the stage for the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980.

Goldwater opposed the welfare state, labor unions and the Civil Rights Act of 1964.  
  
He would later also opposed some of the positions of the religious right – like abortion, gay rights and the role of religion in the public sector – so he would later become more identified as a libertarian than a conservative.

A couple images from the time

We will discuss this point further later in class – but the current ideological divisions that exist between the two major parties can be traced to this period of time.   
  
Each major party went through a process where the ideologues in each forced other out of power, or event out of the party.

Ronald Reagan, who nominated Goldwater at the 1964 Republican Convention began to implement conservative policies.

He was limited in doing so because conservatives did not control the House of Representatives.  
  
Note that conservatives did not consider Republicans like Richard Nixon as being conservative. In many ways Nixon expanded a number of liberal initiatives when he was president. These included the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency and proposing a minimum salary rather than welfare.

In 1994 [Newt Gingrich](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newt_Gingrich) was responsible for developing the [electoral strategy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_elections,_1994) that allowed Republicans to control the House of Representatives for the first time in 40 years.

It involved running a national election with a large number of Republican candidates for the House committed to a series of legislative proposals collectively known as the [Contract with America](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contract_with_America).

The contract featured a number of [substantive and procedural components](http://www.gvpt.umd.edu/jgloekler/documents/contract.pdf) designed to reduce the size and scope of the national government.  
  
[Click here](http://www.heritage.org/research/lecture/the-contract-with-america-implementing-new-ideas-in-the-us) for a survey from the Heritage Foundation.

Substantive Proposals

1. THE FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT  
2. THE TAKING BACK OUR STREETS ACT  
3. THE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT  
4. THE FAMILY REINFORCEMENT ACT  
5. THE AMERICAN DREAM RESTORATION ACT  
6. THE NATIONAL SECURITY RESTORATION ACT  
7. THE SENIOR CITIZENS FAIRNESS ACT  
8. THE JOB CREATION AND WAGE ENHANCEMENT ACT  
9. THE COMMON SENSE LEGAL REFORM ACT  
10. THE CITIZEN LEGISLATURE ACT

Procedural Changes

• FIRST, require all laws that apply to the rest of the country also apply equally to the Congress;   
• SECOND, select a major, independent auditing firm to conduct a comprehensive audit of Congress for waste, fraud or abuse;   
• THIRD, cut the number of House committees, and cut committee staff by one-third;   
• FOURTH, limit the terms of all committee chairs;   
• FIFTH, ban the casting of proxy votes in committee;   
• SIXTH, require committee meetings to be open to the public;   
• SEVENTH, require a three-fifths majority vote to pass a tax increase;   
• EIGHTH, guarantee an honest accounting of our Federal Budget by implementing zero base-line budgeting.

Conservatism Today

There are a great many subgroups within the conservative movement.  
  
Conservatives push a variety of issues, but not everyone pushes the same issue with the same degree of severity. There can also be conflict between these different groups. They don’t all agree on all the issues that fall under the label “conservative.”

One way to get a handle on the internal conflicts is to look through the [American Conservative](http://www.theamericanconservative.com/).  
  
You’ll see these terms used a lot.

Lets very quickly look through the following terms:   
  
Fiscal Conservatives  
Social Conservatives  
Neoconservatives  
Paleoconservatives

[Fiscal Conservatism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fiscal_conservatism)  
  
This ideology looks primarily at the level of government spending and seeks to maintain balanced budgets. Generally fiscal conservatives seek to balance budgets by reducing or eliminating governmental programs. They generally support free markets and oppose many regulations on business which they consider unnecessary.

[Theoconservatism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theoconservatism), or [Social Conservatism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_conservatism_in_the_United_States)  
  
This ideology focuses on what it sees as traditional values, primarily the central role the traditional family, established Christian churches and local governments play in the governing system. Recent focus has been on the teaching of evolution, abortion, birth control, same sex marriage, and the relationship between the church and state.

[Neoconservatism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neoconservatism)  
  
This was a movement developed by many ex-liberals who were disillusioned with the promise of liberalism. While this ideology takes positions on a variety of issues, it is most closely identified with muscular, forceful foreign policy, and a willingness to use American military power to pursue American interests.

[Paleoconservatism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paleoconservatism)  
  
“Paleo” means “old” so this movement can be understood as an attempt to revive an older version of conservatism that dominated politics prior to the New Deal, and helped prevent the United States from joining the League of Nations. It is distinct from other versions of conservatism in its return to a more isolationist viewpoints. It is far more anti-immigrant than other types of conservatism. They are less likely to support military intervention than other conservatives.

[Reactionary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reactionary)  
  
You will sometimes also hear this term used to describe, usually in a negative sense, some conservatives – paleos especially. Generally this describes a person who is opposed to recent political changes and would like to return to a previous political regime.

Its important to keep in mind that while these groups can find common ground when it is necessary to ward off liberalism, they fight amongst themselves for what conservatism stands for and for what the goals of the movement ought to be.  
  
Sometimes an group can find common ground with liberal groups though – which can make the political environment confusing

A special look at libertarianism

Blog Posts:   
  
[Libertarianism](http://theweakerparty.blogspot.com/search/label/libertarianism)

[Libertarians](http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/libertarianism/) are often considered to be part of the conservative movement, but they have a distinct identity that sometimes puts them at odds with conservatism.   
  
Here are basic definitions of [libertarianism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Libertarianism).

“ a set of related [political philosophies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_philosophy) that uphold liberty as the highest political end. This includes emphasis on the primacy of [individual liberty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Individual_and_group_rights),[[political freedom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_freedom), and [voluntary association](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_association).”

“Libertarianism is the view that each person has the right to live his life in any way he chooses so long as he respects the equal rights of others. Libertarians defend each person's right to life, liberty, and property-rights that people have naturally, before governments are created. In the libertarian view, all human relationships should be voluntary; the only actions that should be forbidden by law are those that involve the initiation of force against those who have not themselves used force-actions like murder, rape, robbery, kidnapping, and fraud.” – [libertarianism.org](http://www.libertarianism.org/)

Though libertarians disagree about what governments should do, many argue for something called the Minimal State – also known as the [night-watchman state](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Night-watchman_state) “ with powers limited to those necessary to protect citizens against violence, theft, and fraud.”

Leading libertarian theorists include:

[Friedrich Hayek](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich_Hayek)

[Ludwig von Mises](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludwig_von_Mises)

[Robert Nozick](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Nozick)